

Tenyo Maru COMU Survey #2
Oregon Coastwide Survey
9/10 June 1997

The 1997 Coastwide Seabird Survey and the second of three flights for the Tenyo Maru Project was conducted on 9/10 June 1997. This flight was scheduled for 6/7 June but was canceled then due to predicted rain showers on both days (that did not materialize). The flights were rescheduled for 10/11 June due to aircraft availability but a forecast of rain for June 11 forced another reschedule for the 9/10 June. The vendor agreed to these dates but indicated the helo wouldn't be available until 1230 hrs on the 9th due to other work in the morning. As with our first flight this season we again used Fly Wright Helicopters in Federal Way, Washington using an MD-500d helicopter with fixed inflated floats and a 30 gallon auxiliary fuel tank. Our pilot again this time was Jim Hultgrien.

On 9 June Carrie Phillips drove Roy Lowe and David Pitkin to the Astoria airport and she then returned the vehicle to Newport. Roy and David flew the entire photo survey, checked eagle nests and shot scenic pictures at Nestucca Bay, Neskowin Marsh and Siletz Bay and made it all the way to Newport without refueling due to the auxiliary fuel tank which allowed us to fly for 3 hours and 6 minutes. The helo remained in Newport overnight and then the south coast flight was conducted the following day on 10 June. On 10 June we checked eagle nests on our way to Coos Bay and photographed Gregory Point before refueling at North Bend. We then left North Bend and began the photo survey at Coquille point in Bandon and we were able to work our way down to Brookings and completed the south coast survey without refueling. After finishing Goat Island we flew to Prince Island to take some photos then on to Crescent City to refuel. We then left Crescent City and headed north making it all the way to Newport without refueling and this included scenic photographing at Bandon Marsh, colony photos at Florence and all of Heceta Head. The helo then headed back to Federal Way and arrived there before the 8 hours flight limit was up.

9 June 1997

On 8 June the NW winds were in excess of 40 MPH but were predicted to be down some on 9 June. Except for some early fog around estuaries the sky was clear on 9 June. The wind were light as we drove up the coast but by the time we reached Clatsop County white-caps could be seen offshore. As we waited for the helo at Astoria the winds began to increase and the beach haze began to form. When we departed Astoria at 1240 hrs the winds were about 15 mph from the NW. The sky was very clear all day which made for harsh lighting. We arrived at Tillamook Head at 1248 hrs and started photographing rocks 001-003. It was bumpy here as a fog cloud had formed over the headland due to the NW winds. As we saw on our first flight this year there were no COMU present on these colonies! We then did Tillamook Rock Lighthouse flying at 700 feet. On the second or third pass around the rock we flushed about 70 COMU from the area on the north side

where the over hang occurs. The birds are present in my rolls 1 and 2. We worked our way south photographing all of the colonies that we normally do each year. The BRCO are back on 219-006 and 007 this year after being gone last year. We flew at 700' including Bird Rocks and flushed no birds. The colonies at Bird Rocks looked good given that they had been blown off the rocks twice already this year by Coast Guard helos performing rescues. The number may be down on 017 some though. At Castle Rock (026) the two sub-colonies on the north side of the rock and the small one on the east end of the rock were not present this time and they had been on the last flight! The numbers on the rest of the rock looked good though. Most of the BRCO that nested on 030 last year have moved to the adjacent mainland of Cape Falcon (029) and along with them a few murre were here. The NW wind at this point had increased to about 30 kts. Again on this flight there were no murre on 036

We photographed 038 then checked Twin Rocks at 1335 hrs and BRCO were nesting only on the south rock. We then did Pyramid Rock and Pillar Rock where things looked good. From 1345-1349 we took distant photos of TARNWR at 800' and the rocks had lots of COMU present. There were also Lots of Steller sea lions present and we photographed all of them. The photos of COMU are more general photos and we could probably not do a count from them because we did not want to disturb them.

Next we photographed colonies on the north side of Cape Lookout. Again this year there are small numbers of COMU on 059 in two locations but many fewer BRCO this year. Both the COMU and BRCO numbers on 060 looked closer to normal this year after being mostly abandoned last year. We then continued around Cape Lookout and really got knocked around by the winds and Dave became ill and threw-up. At 1414 hrs there we 2 large feather young in the Reneke Point nest with 2 adults perched nearby. At 1418 we did Haystack Rock then checked the Nestucca Bay eagle nest at 1426 where there was 1 large young in the nest with an adult and another adult perched nearby. On our way south we flew low over Neskowin Marsh and took a series of photos. At 1443 we looked for the Proposal Rock nest but did not find the nest and did not see any adults in the area So we began photos of the colonies south of Harts Cove. All the colonies in this area looked normal. Apparently, Dave became ill at this location also so his coverage is probably not good. At 1449 we checked the Cascade eagle nests and saw no adults and no young. The northern nest is overgrown with grass and the southern nest does not look like it was used. The southern rock of Three Rocks was again covered with BRCO this year so we photographed it at 1500 hrs.

There was one medium gray young and two adults in the Devils Lake nest at 1504 hrs. At 1506 hrs we observed one adult eagle in the Siletz Bay nest tree but not on the nest and there were no eggs or young in the nest. I then shot some good photos of the Shaffer/Erickson easement at Siletz Bay but discovered after we left that I had no film in the camera! At 1515 hrs we checked the Rocky Creek eagle nest but there were no adults or young here this year. The winds here had subsided to 12-15mph. At 1517 hours we photographed Gull Rock and the numbers on the rock looked good except

that the sub-colonies on the north end of the rock were absent. At 1525 hrs we photographed the Yaquina Head colonies circling 4-5 times. Most of the BRCO have abandoned the Mainland here and moved to Flat Top which is packed with birds. The number of COMU on Colony Rock was very impressive. We did not disturb any birds but we believe that BLM called the airport to complain about our flight. At 1531 hrs we looked at the old Yaquina Bay eagle nest and there was some grass beginning to grow in the nest. One adult was hanging around this area and did not want to leave as we circled looking for the new nest. We finally found the new nest 400m to the west and slightly N of the old nest but there were no eggs or young in the nest. We then landed at the Newport airport at 1546 for a total flight time today of 3.9 hrs which includes ferrying from Federal Way to Astoria.

10 June 1997

We departed Newport at 0948 hrs with a solid overcast and a ceiling of about 1200' and NW wind of 5 mph. The air was smooth and there was a good amount of light available. The ocean also looked very nice. We flew south from the Newport airport and checked the eagle nest at Alsea Bay (Legion Road) at 0954. There were no adults present but in the nest was one very large feather chick and a second one that was about half the size and still showing gray feathers. At 1001 hrs we looked at the Big Creek site where the nest was in good condition but no young present. An adult was perched just NW of the nest tree and a juvenile eagle was also in the general area. About 1.5 miles south of Big Creek we observed an adult and a juvenile eagle on the beach. At 1010 hrs we observed a flock of 9 western Canada geese flying north at 700' just off Ponzler State Park north of Heceta Head. At 1013 hrs we checked the eagle nest at Cape Creek. We found the old nest with grass growing in it at the top of the ridge and then located the active nest down slope to the northwest. There were 2 very large young in the nest and 1 adult nearby.

All along the coast today we saw numerous brown pelicans migrating north as well as many flocks of Pacific loons of which most were not in breeding plumage but some were. The weather is now perfect with very light winds and numerous breaks in the overcast providing excellent light conditions. At 1048 we photographed Chiefs Island at Gregory Point then check the eagle nest at South Slough. There were two large feathered young and 1 adult in the nest at 1052. At 1102 hrs we landed at North Bend airport to refuel. After refueling we left North Bend at 1138 and reached Coquille Point at 1151 hrs where we photographed the colonies. There appears to be a few murrelets on middle-Coquille Pt and Elephant Rocks near some cormorants. We did all the colonies here at 600-700' without disturbance and took shots of Coquille Point and Haystack Rock before continuing south. No disturbance noted in the area by us. At 1212 we began photographing Tower Rock under excellent conditions and had to take very few shots. At Castle Rock, cormorants (probably BRCO) are nesting on the east side of the rock also. There were no birds on 022.1 but there were murrelets on 024. Condition out on the Orford Reef were great with very light wind and good lighting. We flew at 800' and a few Stellers were disturbed at West Conical Rock but did not leave. Lots of sea lions on

Seal Rock but couldn't tell if young were there (check slides). We finished the reef at 1235 and headed south. From 1240 to 1248 we did Redfish Rocks and then moved down to Island Rock at 1250 and spent 5 minutes photographing here. We took photos at 052-054 but only PECO were here this year. At 1300 the DCCO at Sister Rock were limited to the southwest corner of the rock. At 1307 we did Hubbard Mound Reef where lots of murre were present and we then started at Rogue Reef at 1311. At about this area going south the loud cover became more solid again with less light but overall it was good. At 1319 we did Hunters Islands where the DCCO are more restricted to the east side this year. We did all of Mack Reef with no problems and continued south hitting Yellow Rock at 1336. There were no birds on 095 or 099.1 as we passed but we did pick up the BRCO on 270-103 at 1340. We reached Whaleshead at 1342 where things looked normal and we then arrived at House Rock at 1347 where as usual only 4-5 BRCO nest are located on top. We then did the Twin Rocks Complex and moved down to Goat Island at 1358 hrs. After doing Goat Island we flew to Prince Island and took some scenic photos and then headed for Crescent City landing there at 1418 hrs with about 30 minutes of fuel still onboard! Weather conditions are still great. After refueling we departed Crescent City at 1501 and took scenic photos of Castle Rock before heading north.

On our way north we took some scenics at Bandon Marsh at 1600 hrs and continued north and did not need to stop for fuel at North Bend. Before we reached the Reedsport area the overcast broke away and it was mostly clear north of here but still calm. We photographed colony 270-000.1 at 1634 hrs where the DCCO colony is smaller and located in the trees right along the river. At 1642 we started photographing at Cox Rock and at 1655 we completed Heceta Head and headed north. There were no BRCO on Cox Rock and only a few on the mainland until colony 033 where there were thousands. The number on Parrot Rock looked a little low and they were real low on Blast Rock. There were no cormorants on Conical Rock and none on the adjacent mainland and very few on the mainland in 027. Most of the birds are at Sea Lion Caves. We headed north at 1655 hrs and landed at Newport at 1712 hrs with the first sign of an approaching frontal system beginning to show to the west. Jim departed Newport at around 1830 and headed northeast to Federal Way, WA and it took him 1.6 hrs. Total flight time for the helo today was 7.7 hrs so the entire survey with ferrying took 11.6 hrs of flight time.

Film Used = 87 Rolls

Roy	6/9 = 27 rolls	6/10 = 30 rolls	Dave	6/9 = 16 rolls	6/10 = 14 rolls
Rolls 1-22	ASA 100 Push 1 Stop		Rolls 51-70	ASA 100 Push 1 Stop	
Rolls 24-44	ASA 100 Push 1 Stop		Rolls 71-80	ASA 400	
Roll 46-50	ASA 100 Push 1 Stop				
Rolls 101-109	ASA 400				

No Rolls 23, 45, and 110 from this flight.
Roll 23 is Roll 17 from 5/22/97 flight
Roll 110 is Roll 31 from 5/22/97 flight